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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Monday October 2, 1933.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "Canning Meat at Home." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics,
U.S.D.A.

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Though the time for home butchering hasn't arrived yet on many farms, this is none too early to be thinking about those other two jobs that go along with home butchering -- home canning of meat and home curing of meat. You've often heard of the advantages of taking Old Father Time by the forelock. Well, here's your opportunity. Here's your chance to write for the latest meat canning or meat curing information to your State college or to the Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C. Here's your opportunity to study up in advance so you'll be able to go at the jobs when the time comes, not with a hit-and-miss rush, but with science backing every step you take.

Today let's talk over the process of canning meat at home. Perhaps you remember the time, not so long ago, when many of us fought shy of home-canned meat. And with good reason. Meat was difficult to can safely, it spoiled easily and when spoiled was a menace to health. But since that time canning specialists have made careful investigations of the process and have found safe methods for putting up meat. We don't have to worry about spoilage if we follow these scientific directions carefully. Last fall, home canners all over the country under the supervision of the extension service put up millions of pounds of meat safely, and helped provide their families with food for winter. You can can chicken, beef, veal, mutton, lamb, pork and venison. And you can can meat sundries like heart, liver, and tongue. With proper equipment and some help, you can put up a whole beef at home. And you can can the fowls that you don't want to keep and feed over the winter; let them join the supplies on your pantry shelves.

Why has meat always been such a difficult food to can? Three good reasons. It is a non-acid food. And, as you know, all non-acid foods require an especially high temperature for sterilization. They need a temperature above the boiling point of water. You can't get that temperature in a water bath -- you need steam pressure. Second reason for difficulty in canning -- meat has a very thick compact texture hard for heat to penetrate. Finally, meat is a protein food. And the type of spoilage that occurs in protein is dangerous from the health standpoint.

Well, now, those are the reasons why the canning specialists have laid down such careful rules about canning meat at home. And those are the reasons why you need to follow these rules if you want to avoid waste from spoilage and have your canned meat wholesome.

The specialists say first that meat for canning should be fresh and clean, should come from healthy animals. And they say that the animal heat should be entirely gone from the meat before you start canning. This usually requires twenty-four hours for large pieces. During this time you will want to keep the meat cool but not allow it to freeze. The specialists also advise absolute cleanliness of the canner herself, her work table and her utensils. Wipe the meat carefully with a clean damp cloth, but don't dip it in water because that will draw out the juices. When you are cutting the meat up, cut out all dark places, cartilage and bones.

To prevent spoilage, the canning specialists emphasize several other points. They insist that safe canning of meat is done only in a steam pressure cooker. And they say that if you put up the meat in jars, you must be sure those jars have a perfect, air-tight seal. Test each one before you use it. For ease in heat penetration, cut the meat in pieces of a convenient size for serving, pack it loosely in the container and use small containers. You can can meat either in tin or glass, but never use larger sizes than pint glass jars or No. 2 or No. 3 tin cans. By the way, a pint glass jar holds about a pound of meat, packed loosely as the specialists advise. Never cram the meat in jars. Put it so that the broth that surrounds it can circulate freely. Another point about heat penetration -- use only the amount of fat you need for flavor. Many people have asked about canning fried chicken or pieces of meat rolled in flour. The specialists don't advise this. They say flour, crumbs or meal make heat penetration just that much more difficult. And they say that too much cooking before packing in the jar gives the meat a warmed-over flavor.

The specialists advise a hot pack for meat as for most foods in canning. Heat meat until no red color shows, but don't cook them to doneness. Pack the meat hot into hot sterilized jars and fill the jars with hot broth. Process in the pressure canner at once. That's the hot pack.

The Bureau of Home Economics is particularly interested in helping homemakers conserve food. If you have some questions about meat canning or any other kind of food conservation, or if you want advice and directions, write to the Bureau of Home Economics at Washington, D. C.

The specialists have planned a good dinner menu for meat-canning season. If you are canning pork, save out the tenderloin and serve it fresh. Then here's the menu: Baked pork tenderloin; Buttered quickly-cooked cauliflower or cabbage; Harvard beets; Home canned fruit sauce and Sugar cookies.

Tomorrow: "Questions and Answers."

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